

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Thursday 16 February 2012 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor JG Jarvis (Chairman)

Councillors: AJM Blackshaw, H Bramer, RJ Phillips, PD Price and DB Wilcox

In attendance: Councillors RB Hamilton, JA Hyde, AW Johnson, MAF Hubbard, TM James, RI Matthews and A Seldon

148. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: JG Jarvis, Leader of the Council and PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing.

149. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

150. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

151. CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY

Councillor Hyde, Cabinet Support Team Member Children's Services presented the report to Cabinet on behalf of the Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing. The following points were made during discussion:

- The Child Poverty Strategy is a statutory document. A partnership steering group that included the voluntary sector was formed to develop the strategy and provide a co-ordinated approach to tackling child poverty.
- Currently 4,685 under 16 year olds were in poverty. The figure was expected to increase in the present economic climate.
- The average working income for the county was less than £20k significantly below the average both regionally and nationally. Additionally rural families needed a 24% higher income to keep pace with urban families.
- Cabinet agreed it was the responsibility of the Council to ensure that there was an increase in skilled work in the county which would provide better incomes for families.
- The apprenticeship strategy was seen as a key element of addressing youth unemployment.
- In discussing housing it was noted that families could be in temporary accommodation for up to 12 months and it was felt that more could be done to address this issue.

Cabinet was reminded of the information that had recently been sent to all Members on the proposed changes to the use of Children's Centres. The Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture moved the report which was seconded by the Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) the Child Poverty Strategy be approved; and,
- b) the approach to the delivery and accountability/governance arrangements of the strategy and the approach to updating the strategy and needs assessment be approved.

152. WASTE CONTRACT - VARIATIONS

The Cabinet Member Major Contracts presented the Waste Contract to Cabinet and made on the following points:

- This was a joint Cabinet report with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) on the integrated waste management PFI contract originally signed by both authorities in December 1998 to run for 25 years, December 2023.
- The report sets out the framework for Herefordshire Council's negotiating position, which includes the parameters for planning, finance, contractual and technical (see Appendices 1-4 of the report).
- Merica Waste Management and the two Councils are awaiting the decision of the Secretary of State on the planning application for an Energy from Waste Plant at Hartlebury, Worcestershire, which was the subject of a public inquiry in November 2011. This is due by 23 April 2012.
- The report does not financially commit the two Councils to any variation to the contract at this stage, this would be the subject of a further report. Any variation will need to be affordable and provide value for money.
- In the contractual parameters it is important that the two Councils agree to extend the joint working agreement insofar as it relates to this facility for a period commensurate with the intended life of the facility.

The Head of Special Projects reminded Cabinet that the existing landfill site would be full by 2023 and currently there was no alternative. He informed Cabinet that the report before them was a mirror of the report presented to WCC on 9 February, which was approved by the Cabinet.

Additional comments from Members:

- Since the commencement of the contract in 1998 considerable recycling is carried out in both counties thereby reducing the number of black bags sent for landfill.
- Cabinet was informed that the contractors had been advised that they would also need commercial waste to fulfil the contract at the plant.
- In response to a question Cabinet was advised that the plant would be able to supply electricity to the national grid and would also combine heat with power to the Hartlebury trading estate. The plant had the capacity to provide electricity for a substantial sized town.
- It was noted that should electricity prices rise there would be financial benefits from the electricity provided due to the increase.
- In response to a question on the alternatives if planning is rejected, Cabinet was advised that the options were limited and were outlined at Appendix 5 to the report with option G - energy from waste being located out of the county, being the worst case scenario.
- In referring to page 32 of the report and the possible under capacity of the plant. Cabinet was informed that should the plant be built there would be enough capacity to cope with the requirements of the plant and landfill.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) Cabinet noted progress since the reports to Cabinet in September 2009 and January 2010;
- b) Subject to recommendation (d) below the Director for Places and Communities be authorised, in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and Commercial and Worcestershire County Council, to agree the negotiated form of a variation to the existing waste contract with Mercia Waste Management Ltd (Mercia) to put into effect Mercia's proposals for:
 - i) The provision of a residual waste treatment facility (RWTF) using Energy from Waste technology at Hartlebury Trading Estate; and
 - ii) Such other ancillary issues as are appropriate in relation to the waste contract (collectively 'the contractor's proposals') provided such a variation is in compliance with
 - a) The planning parameters
 - b) The financial parameters
 - c) The contractual parameters and
 - d) The technical parameters(all are set out in the report and collectively the 'parameters'); and
- (c) the Director for Places and Communities provide a further report to Cabinet seeking formal authority to execute such a variation when the Director considers, having regard to any advice from the appointed advisors, that the parameters have been materially satisfied; and
- (d) the authorisation under (b) is subject to Worcestershire County Council giving approvals substantially in the same form as those contained in the recommendations of this report and the two Councils agreeing in principle to extend the joint working agreement in so far as it relates to the Energy from Waste facility for a period commensurate with the intended life of the facility.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm

CHAIRMAN